(d) whether any specific suggestions have been received from NGOs and social activists in this regard; and

(e) the steps proposed to give a proper and patient hearing to the less privileged sections of society who want cheaper software?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. A meeting is being convened shortly to discuss these issues. Government as a matter of policy does not favour any particular kind of expensive and monopolistic software. Government generally follows a technology neutral policy.

Recovery of dues from International Maritime Satellite Organisation

3589. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited failed to recover its dues from the International Maritime Satellite Organisation during the last three years;

(b) if so, the amount involved and the reasons for not effecting the recovery; and

(c) whether any accountability was fixed for it and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) VSNL has informed that there are no pending dues from International Maritime Satellite Organization.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Transfer of BSNL employees in Andhra Pradesh

3590. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL has resorted to frequent transfers in some districts of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether it is a fact that some junior employees have been transferred four times within a period of fifteen days in certain districts like East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts;

(c) whether Government had received any complaints in this regard;

(d) if so, what are the reasons for such transfer;

(e) whether a rational policy would be followed; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir.

(d) Do not arise in view of (a) to (c) above.

(e) Rational Policy for transfers is already being followed.

(f) Does not arise in view of (e) above.

Waiting list for telephone connections in Bihar

†3591. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the applications pending for telephone connections in the different telephone exchanges in Madhubani district of Bihar, year-wise and exchange-wise, during the last three years;

(b) the number of connections recommended from the M.R quota out of the above;

(c) whether some connections have also been provided irrespective of the serial number of the free receipts;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether Government would provide these connections within a prescribed time limit; if so, the details of the plan in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) The details are given in the Statement (See below).

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†Originai notice of the question was received in Hindi.